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Published in:
Lotus and Laurel

Publication date:
2015

Document version
Other version

Citation for published version (APA):
Hagen, F. N. (2015). Hieratic Ostraca in the National Museum, Copenhagen. In R. Nyord, & K. Ryholt (Eds.), *Lotus and Laurel: Studies on Egyptian Language and Religion in Honour of Paul John Frandsen* (pp. 87-102). Museum Tusculanum. Carsten Niebuhr Institut Publications Vol. 39

CNI PUBLICATIONS 39

LOTUS AND LAUREL

STUDIES ON EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE
AND RELIGION
IN HONOUR OF PAUL JOHN FRANDSEN

Edited by Rune Nyord
and Kim Ryholt

HIERATIC OSTRACA IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, COPENHAGEN*

FREDRIK HAGEN

Abstract. The article publishes the hieratic ostraca from the collection of the National Museum, Copenhagen, consisting of a magical text, an unidentified literary text, and an administrative text. They were all bequeathed to the museum by the Danish Egyptologist H. O. Lange, and the article includes a discussion of archival material related to their provenance, as well as photographs, hieroglyphic transcriptions, translations and commentaries.

INTRODUCTION

Most major collections of Egyptian antiquities contain hieratic ostraca of the New Kingdom, many of which can be shown to have originated at the village of Deir el-Medina on internal evidence, or on purely statistical grounds: the site has yielded close to 20,000 ostraca, against only a few hundred in total from other New Kingdom sites in Egypt. The National Museum in Copenhagen is no exception, although the number is low in comparison to other collections, consisting of only three limestone flakes. The ostraca were bequeathed to the museum by the well-known Danish Egyptologist H.O. Lange (1863-1943) upon his death. Lange was one of the central figures of Danish Egyptology in the late 19th and early 20th century who, initially in his capacity as Chief Librarian of the Royal Danish Library, was well placed to provide the foundations of the discipline in Denmark. Having reformed the Danish library system during the first two decades of the 20th century, he then turned his attention full-time to Egyptology, and set about consolidating it as an academic subject in its own right. He let himself be appointed the first *lektor* (associate professor) in Egyptology at the University of Copenhagen in 1924, and upon his retirement in 1937 he bequeathed his

* It is a pleasure to be able to contribute to Paul John Frandsen's Festschrift with the publication of at least one object that he himself will have observed on several occasions; ostrakon O. NM 11677, which has been on display in the Egyptian gallery of the National

considerable personal library to the department, which today forms the core of the institutional library at the Carsten Niebuhr Department at the University of Copenhagen.¹

Lange spent most of his life in Copenhagen, except for two lengthy stays in Egypt (1899-1900; 1929-1930), in part because his duties at the Royal Library meant he could normally only travel during his holidays. Nonetheless he studied in Berlin under Adolf Erman during short stays in the city in 1887 and 1891, and during his summer holidays of 1892 and 1893 he visited London and the British Museum,² but otherwise he seems to have travelled less than many of his contemporaries. His short stays abroad, as well as his time in Cairo working in the Egyptian Museum, nonetheless allowed him to establish a considerable network of contacts, and he kept in touch with many of the leading scholars of the day by regular letter-writing, building up an extraordinary collection of photographs of Egyptian monuments and papyrus manuscripts, some of which are still preserved at the Carsten Niebuhr Department. In Berlin he studied papyrus manuscripts at first hand, rather than dealing with the often inferior facsimile copies published by Lepsius and others, and he quickly became something of an authority on hieratic. His publication record reflects this to a degree, but his *Nachlass* shows that he worked more extensively on a wider range of hieratic manuscripts than suggested by the publications,³ and colleagues at the time cited him as one of the few who could make valuable contributions to the decipherment of Middle Kingdom hieratic.⁴ Lange was also instrumental in the acquisition of the famous Carlsberg papyri through

¹ For this period of Danish Egyptology, see Iversen, E., 'Ægyptologi indtil 1937', in Jensen, P.J., and Grane, L. (eds.), *Københavns Universitet 1479-1979*, vol. VIII, Copenhagen 1992, pp. 628-632.

² Iversen, in *Københavns Universitet 1479-1979*, vol. VIII, p. 628; cf. his letters published in Helweg-Larsen, P. (ed.), *H. O. Lange: En Mindebog*, Copenhagen 1955, pp. 159-164 (Berlin, 24 June-24 July, 1887), pp. 253-255 (Berlin, 24 June-c. 5 July, 1891), pp. 277-279 (London, 21 July-11 August, 1892), pp. 296-297 (24 June-end of July, 1893).

³ For a bibliography, see Erichsen, W., 'H. O. Lange som Ægyptolog', in *H. O. Lange: En Mindebog*, pp. 372-373. The unpublished material at the Carsten Niebuhr Department is extensive, and includes transcriptions and facsimile drawings of many papyrus manuscripts, as well as a dictionary in the form of an extensive slip archive. For example, his personal papers show that by 1891 he had completed an *editio princeps* of *The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, including both Papyrus Prisse and the two London manuscripts (L1 and L2), which never appeared in print. The material was subsequently put at the disposal of Jéquier, G., *Le Papyrus Prisse et ses variantes: papyrus de la Bibliothèque Nationale (nos. 183 à 194), papyrus 10371 et 10435 du British Museum, Tablette Carnarvon au Musée du Caire*, Paris 1911.

the Carlsberg Foundation (*Carlsbergfondet*) between 1931 and 1938, which secured a significant part of the Tebtunis temple library for the University of Copenhagen, a far-sighted move which provided Danish Egyptology with one of its key areas of specialisation.⁵ Lange visited Egypt on two occasions: the first visit, in 1899-1900, was primarily to work on the Middle Kingdom stelae in the Egyptian Museum for the *Catalogue générale*, a work which he undertook together with Heinrich Schäfer,⁶ and the second visit took place in 1929-1930.⁷ The museum records note that the ostraca came to the museum in 1943 as 'A gift from the estate of Head Librarian, Dr. phil. H. O. Lange, according to the terms of his last will and testament (April 1943). The following collection was acquired during two long stays in Egypt',⁸ but with no further information about specifically where in Egypt or exactly when the pieces were acquired. Both stays in Egypt were extensively documented by Lange in his diaries, now kept in the Royal Library of Copenhagen,⁹ and consultation of these has yielded more information about the provenance of the ostraca. The diary of the first trip, written jointly with his wife, Jonna Lange, is by far the most detailed, and contains some 800 pages describing their life in Cairo, their meetings with other Egyptologists at the time, and his various purchases of antiquities. As a philologist he was particularly interested in inscriptions and he often mentions buying papyri, but the only reference to an ostrakon during this first visit to Egypt occurs in the entry dated Wednesday 22 November 1899, where his wife Jonna writes:

'Yesterday was another busy day for the gentlemen.... During the trip to Giza on Monday we were quite a few; Dr Thiersch, a remarkably pleasant young man, was with us, so we were five in addition to our guide, Abdallah. He is a cousin of Ali and was to act as interpreter because Ali, a very fine old gentleman, didn't speak

⁵ A monograph on Lange, his purchase of the Tebtunis temple library, and his experiences with the antiquities market in Egypt from 1899 to 1930 is being prepared by F. Hagen and K. Ryholt.

⁶ Described in Schmidt, V., *Af et langt Livs Historie*, Copenhagen 1925, p. 105. Their work was published as Lange, H.O., and Schäfer, H., *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs*, vols. I-IV (= *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire*, nos. 20001-20780), Berlin 1902-1925.

⁷ Erichsen, in *H. O. Lange: En Mindebog*, p. 368.

⁸ 'Gave fra Overbibliotekar, Dr. phil. H. O. Langes dødsbo i Henhold til afdødes Testamente (April 1943). Den følgende Samling er tilvejebragt under to længre Ophold i Ægypten'; *Fortegnelse over Antiksamlingens Forøgelse i aarene 1942-1949*, VIII, p. 53.

⁹ Lange, H.O. and Lange, J., *Dagbog fra Ægyptenrejsen 1899-1900* (unpublished manuscript, Royal Library, Copenhagen); Lange, H.O., *Dagbog fra Ægypten. 1929-1930*

English. We had coffee twice at Ali's place, immediately after arrival and then again just before leaving. Hans was given a gift there; the dealers are much taken with him, probably because they think he has lots of money, even though Hans assures them that this is not the case. There was a pile of potsherds there with texts, which Hans and Thiersch had been examining; he took aside a lovely piece with a particularly beautiful demotic inscription (late Egyptian), which he cannot yet read, and asked how much it would cost. Abdallah asked Ali, and after some negotiation Abdallah put it in Hans' pocket and told him that it was a gift from Ali.¹⁰

The passage could conceivably refer to a hieratic ostrakon, because although the word used to describe the script is 'demotic', it is not certain that Jonna would have been able to differentiate between the two, and many museum registers mislabel hieratic ostraca as demotic, and vice-versa. The specification 'late Egyptian' (*ny-ægyptisk*) could also indicate an inscription of the New Kingdom, but the meaning of the Danish term at this point in history could also simply be a clarification of the word demotic (as 'later Egyptian'). The detail regarding Lange's lack of ability to read the inscription, however, suggests that the diary does refer to a demotic ostrakon, and not one written in hieratic; he was at this point well versed in Middle Kingdom hieratic, and would presumably have had few problems with reading Ramesside ostraca. There are two demotic ostraca in the National Museum which are potsherds ('There was a pile of potsherds there with texts'); both are unpublished, but one is particularly well preserved with 14 lines of text, justifying the description given by Joanna of 'a lovely piece with a particularly beautiful demotic inscription' ('*et dejligt Stykke med en særlig smuk demotisk Indskrift*'): this carries the inventory number NM 11685.¹¹

There are two references to specifically hieratic ostraca in Lange's second diary documenting his visit to Egypt in 1929-1930. In the first entry, he mentions how, on Tuesday 31 December 1929, while he was on his way back to the hotel for lunch – having copied and collated an inscription in the tomb of Nebwenef at Dra Abu el-Naga (TT 157) – a man approached him: 'On the way there a man came up to me with a hieratic ostrakon in a small but quite nice hand. I bought it for 5 piasters.'¹² The price is within the range attested for hieratic ostraca in

¹⁰ Lange and Lange, *Dagbog fra Ægyptenrejsen 1899-1900*, p. 143. For the antiquities dealer Ali, see the forthcoming monograph by Hagen and Ryholt (n. 5 above) which includes a list of dealers active in Egypt from c. 1899 to c. 1930.

¹¹ The other is O. NM 11684.

this period: 5 piastres = 5 pence (in 1929), or the equivalent of about £1 in today's (2012) money.¹³ One of Lange's notebooks from his Cairo visit, labelled 'Theben, Dec. 29 – Jan. 30', has a transcription of NM11679 (an 18th Dynasty administrative note) under the heading 'Ostrakon bought in Qurnah', confirming that this ostrakon is the one mentioned in that diary entry.¹⁴

The second reference occurs during the same stay at Luxor, when he visited a dealer called Muhamed Abd el-Haggag who lived in Dra Abu el-Naga on the West Bank.¹⁵ Having perused his antiquities he made no purchase there, but the dealer then took him to one of his uncles who lived close by, 'who sold me a Coptic lamp, decorated with a frog, and a hieratic ostrakon, for 5 piasters.'¹⁶ The price of this hieratic ostrakon is lower than that mentioned above because it includes the price of a lamp, and, if one compares the relative size and state of preservation (and presumably therefore the value) of NM 11679 (the administrative note) with NM 11678 (very fragmentary and largely illegible), then the latter object would seem to be the more likely candidate for that transaction.

These are the only two entries that explicitly refer to hieratic ostraca being bought by Lange, but because the price of such objects was relatively low, it is quite possible that the third hieratic ostrakon published here (NM 11679) featured among the numerous lots of unspecified 'small things' that he bought during his visits to Egypt. One possible candidate in that respect is a purchase made at Thebes in 1900

¹³ For the price of hieratic ostraca at this time, see F. Hagen, 'On some fake hieratic ostraca', *JEA* 96 (2010), pp. 75-76. Compare *Dagbog fra Ægypten, 1929-1930*, pp. 243-244, where Lange buys twelve Greek and Coptic ostraca for 5 piasters each (for a translation of the passage, see below). He also buys a particularly well preserved Coptic ostrakon (= NM 11683, unpublished), with writing on both sides, for 20 piasters (p. 195). Charles Wilbour mentioned in a letter (dated 25 February 1890) that he visited a Luxor dealer where Eugène Revillout 'paid forty-two francs for twelve ostraca, such as we buy for half a piaster at most', but with no indication of script or language; Capart, J. (ed.), *Travels in Egypt [December 1880 to May 1891]: Letters of Charles Edwin Wilbour*, New York 1936, p. 557. The price paid by Revillout is high – which is why Wilbour mentions the transaction – but the price he says they normally pay ('half a piastre') seems rather low, perhaps an exaggeration for rhetorical effect. To put the regular price of a hieratic ostrakon (5 piasters) in context, it was equivalent to payment for a whole day's work on e.g. Bruyère's excavation at Deir el-Medina at this time (Lange, *Dagbog fra Ægypten, 1929-1930*, p. 203).

¹⁴ The same notebook has copies of inscriptions from the tomb of Nebwenef a few pages before the transcription of NM11679. Lange's notebooks, both from his Egypt travels and from his work on collections in Turin, Berlin and London, are kept at the Carsten Niebuhr Department of the University of Copenhagen (I am grateful to Thomas Christiansen for bringing the material to my attention).

¹⁵ For this dealer see the forthcoming monograph by Hagen and Ryholt (n. 5 above).

while riding up from the mortuary temples on the west bank to visit the Ptolemaic temple at Deir el-Medina (the village itself had not been excavated at the time): 'Everywhere one is accosted by Arabs selling antiquities, both fakes and real ones; I had already acquired a quantity of small change in Cairo for just such occasions, and several small objects made their way into my pockets'.¹⁷ The diary reveals no further information about the objects bought, but both the general area (Thebes) and the specific location (on route to Deir el-Medina) make this a transaction that could, in principle, have involved a hieratic ostrakon. Lange was particularly interested in buying hieratic ostraca on his second trip, and so one might have expected him to mention it if he had bought it then; on one occasion he even mentions *not* finding such objects:

In the afternoon [of 17 January 1900, Lange's last day in Luxor] I went over to the old Girgis – the young one had stayed in Qena – to copy some stelae in his storage, and to riffle through (*rode gennem*) three baskets full of stuff to find hieratic ostraca. I found none, but did find demotic ones. I sought out 12 Greek and Coptic ostraca, which I got for the price of 5 piaster each.¹⁸

Lange need not have acquired the third and final hieratic ostrakon while in Egypt, however, and he could instead have acquired it after his return to Denmark, via his Egyptian contacts. Towards the end of the second trip he notes in his diary that he had instructed two dealers, Zaki Mahmoud in Cairo and Girgis in Luxor, to specifically look for hieratic ostraca.¹⁹ In addition to the travel diaries, many of Lange's personal letters are also archived at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, and two of these, from the aforementioned Zaki Mahmoud, mention ostraca. The first, sent just after Lange's return to Denmark, confirms that he had been instructed to look for ostraca:

Dear Sirs, Mr Lange & Miss Lange

I received your letter with many thanks with cheque for £10 also I received £50 from Mr Zuicher. I was wondering to hear from you & am glad to hear from you? I am searching for the articles you require! I shall be pleased to see you again. I am glad to say that I

am alright! Trusting you the same? I received two post cards from Mrs. Hornimann no address mentioned on them please remind her when you meet her to write to me.

I hope your father mother your son & daughter and every member of your family are all well I am glad to tell you that we are all well. Best wishes to you from my father & my son. There are a few good antiquities in my shop at the Cairo Museum for sale. Please write to me if you require any! Kindly give my card to any of your friends coming to Cairo. Good bye.

I am your obedient servant,

Zaki Mahmoud.

PS. Ostrech stone I am still looking for it as soon as found I shall gladly send it to you.²⁰

The letter confirms that Lange had left specific instructions about what kind of objects he was looking for ('I am searching for the articles you require'), and that this included ostraca in particular ('Ostrech stone I am still looking for it').²¹ The second, undated letter, mentions three ostraca that Mahmoud had bought on Lange's behalf and sent to Copenhagen:

Dear Prof. & Mrs. Lange,

Thank you very much for your kind letter which I was most happy to receive & to hear from it that you are well & enjoying the best of health. Now about my commission, in your letter you say that if you did buy the things from Cairo you would have give it to me but do you remember that when I went to see you & Mrs Lange off at Cairo station & you promised me in front of the lady that you will give me 10 percent & send me the money & Mrs Lange is witness about this. Moreover I found 3 pieces of ostraks & sent them to you as you told me while in Cairo. Also a square piece has the name of the Goddess Isis & I hope that you will receive them safely. The 3 pieces of ostraks have been seen by Mr Alfred Sakkar (?) & Mr Lhont (?),²² they said that they will send a letter to the man they know to examine the articles & the prices is depend on you & then

¹⁷ Lange, *Dagbog fra Ægypten, 1929-1930*, p. 332.

¹⁸ Lange, *Dagbog fra Ægypten, 1929-1930*, pp. 243-244.

¹⁹ Lange, *Dagbog fra Ægypten, 1929-1930*, p. 346; 'Zaki and Girgis will collect hieratic ostraca for me'. The absence of more hieratic ostraca resulting from this is best explained by the low prices involved; trade in ostraca was simply not as lucrative for dealers as trade in objects like statues and reliefs, and so looking for ostraca was probably

²⁰ Letter from Zaki Mahmoud to H. O. Lange, dated 15 May 1930; the language, spelling and typography of the original has been retained.

²¹ The different hands of the three letters from Zaki Mahmoud show that he did not write them himself, and the person he dictated to was probably unfamiliar with Egyptological terminology; this would account for the different spellings of the word 'ostraca' ('ostraks', 'ostrech stone'). In Lange's diary, Mahmoud is explicitly said to be able to speak English but not to read it: Lange, *Dagbog fra Ægypten, 1929-1930*, p. 326.

you will send me the money for the things & also my commission & many thanks to you forever. Yours faithfully, Zaki Mahmoud.²³

The three ostraca mentioned here probably correspond to the three demotic ostraca in the Papyrus Hafniensis collection, all of which are unpublished,²⁴ but the letter demonstrates that Lange did purchase such objects from Copenhagen through his contacts in Cairo; the final hieratic ostrakon could have arrived in a similar way.

I know nothing more about the modern history of the hieratic ostraca, and I am not aware of any of them ever having been referred to in print.

NM 11677 (Pl. 3)


The largest of the three ostraca is NM 11677, a piece of limestone measuring c. 12 x 18.5 cm, which is currently on display in the Egyptian gallery of the museum. It contains five lines of hieratic on the front, written in black ink with six versepoints in red; the back is empty. There is a single supralinear correction above the first line. As preserved it is complete at the top and the right-hand edge, and probably also at the bottom (there is space for another line but no trace of ink), but an unknown amount is lost at the left hand edge. The text is a magical or funerary text with the title 'Spell for opening the road before the feet of a man', and the writing is in a competent Ramesside hand. A full translation runs as follows:

1. Spell for opening the road ^a before the feet (•) of a man ^b, • as he walks [forth...]
2. How beautiful, how bright, is perfection! • How beautiful is the sky, how beautiful is the ea[rth] ^c •...
3. the offerings of Re as you rise ^d, • like the offerings of [...]
4. <It?> ^e is opened because of my words, • like <it?> is opened by [...]
5. My face is turned towards Sopdu-•Hor, lord of the East ^f [...]

²³ Undated letter from Z. Mahmoud to H. O. Lange, written on paper with Hotel Semiramis letter-head.

²⁴ O. Haun. dem. I, 2 and 3; cf. the forthcoming monograph by Hagen and Ryholt (n. 5 above). Although unlikely to be part of this group there is also an 'ostrakon with an Arabic text' listed as part of the bequest from Lange to the National Museum in 1943. This was handed over to the Ethnographic Collection of the National Museum in 1944 (*Fortegnelse over Antiksamlingens Forøgelse i aarene 1942–1949*, VIII, p. 113), where it

Notes

a. The initial part of the title ('spell for opening the road') is paralleled as a variant of the title of Coffin Text Spell 225, where one coffin from Deir el-Bersha (Cairo CG 28086 = B4C, temp. Senwosret I) has  [NN], 'Spell for opening the road for [NN]', but the spell which follows bears little resemblance to the text of O. NM 11677, with the exception of the mention of 'sky' (*pt*) and 'land' (*t3*).²⁵ For other examples of a 'road' (*w3.t*) being 'opened' (*wn*), see the examples cited by *Wb.* I, 312.2, where the sense is clearly to make a road traversable by removing obstacles. This can either be in a physical sense, such as when kings 'open' roads for their subjects (e.g. Thutmose III, whose canal at the first cataract was called 'Opened is the road through the goodness of Thutmose III', or Seti I who 'opened' the roads for his people), or in the metaphysical sense of religious texts, where gods may 'open the way' for the deceased.²⁶ The theme of knowing the topography of the afterlife is a central concern of the mortuary literature, and in the Book of the Dead several spells contain references to 'roads' that need to be 'opened' for the deceased,²⁷ as do funerary monuments which refer to roads being opened in the necropolis.²⁸ Perhaps most relevant here is BD 78 ('Spell for assuming the form of a divine falcon'), which includes numerous injunctions to various gods to 'clear the roads for' the deceased, as well as a final description of how 'the roads of both sky and earth are opened for me' (*wn n=i w3.wt iry.t pt iry.t t3*);²⁹ a reference to roads both of the sky and the earth also occurs in BD 9 ('Spell for penetrating the Underworld'), where the deceased

²⁵ De Buck, A., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (=OIP 64), Chicago 1947, vol. III, 212; Faulkner, R. O., *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, vol. I, Warminster 1973, p. 178. For the date of the coffin, see Willems, H., *Chests of Life* (=Medelingen en verhandelingen van het Voorzigtisch-Egyptisch Genootschap "Ex Oriente Lux" 25), Leiden 1988, p. 74.

²⁶ E.g. PT Spell 93, 295; BD Spell 149, 32-33 ('Open your road for me', *wn n=i w3.t=tn*).

²⁷ E.g. BD 9, 78, 92, 110, 149, 180.

²⁸ 'Opened for you is the road in the necropolis' (*wn n=k w3t m hr<.t>-ntr*); stela of the High Steward Huy and his son, the High Steward in Memphis, Ipuy (Florence 2567, temp. Amenhotep III-IV); Bosticco, S., *Le stele egiziane*, vol. 2: *Del nuovo regno*, Rome 1965, pp. 38-39 no. 32, pl. 3.

²⁹ Allen, T.G., *The Book of the Dead* (=Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37), Chicago 1974, p. 67; the text is from the 18th Dynasty papyrus of Nu (P. BM EA 10477), for which see now Lapp, G., *The Papyrus of Nu* (=Catalogue of the Books of the Dead in the British Museum 1), London 1997, pls. 39-41. The spell is essentially the same as CT Spell 312, attested in Middle Kingdom coffins; see e.g. de Buck, A., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (=OIP 67), Chicago 1931, vol. IV, 86f (referring to Cairo CG 28094, a coffin from

asks that ‘all the roads in the sky and earth be opened for me’ (*wn n=i w3.wt nb.t im.wt pt im.wt t3*).³⁰ Although the text on NM 11677 echoes this phrase with its use of similar imagery (‘How beautiful is the sky, how beautiful is the ea[rth]’), this need not indicate that it belongs to the corpus of mortuary literature (see discussion below).

b. The scribe has added the words ‘of a man’ (*n s*) above the line, perhaps after having started the subordinate clause – judging by the ink – where his use of the suffix pronoun ‘he’ necessitated an antecedent (‘a man’).

c. The restoration $\overline{\text{—}}$ suits the traces and the sense of the passage. The pairing of the words ‘sky’ and ‘land’ is of course common.

d. There are faint traces of a small sign under *n* which might correspond to Δ (*htp nt R^c hft wbn=k*) or 𐀀 (*htp n=i R^c hft wbn=k*); I can think of no other sign which would be meaningful here. The interpretation of this line is difficult because of the fragmentary text, and an alternative rendering is possible: [*m*] *htp <i>n=i R^c*, “‘Welcome Re’ (is said) by me as you rise’, taking *htp* as part of the common greeting formula and with an omitted *i* in the expression ‘(said) by N’, might also suit the context.³¹

e. The subject of *wn* seems to have been omitted because as it stands the phrase *lw wn hr mdwt=i* makes little sense. The faint traces immediately above the verb (shown as hatching in the transcription) could either be a correction by the scribe supplying said subject, or traces of palimpsest; in any case they are too faint to be legible.

f. The mention of Sopdu, Lord of the East, in a spell possibly dealing with travelling seems natural given his association with foreign lands; the specific form Sopdu-Hor (to which this text may be the earliest reference) is elsewhere described as ‘of the two Eastern foreign lands’,³²

³⁰ Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, p. 10; the text here too is from P. BM EA 10477 (see n. 29), cf. Lapp, *Papyrus of Nu*, pl. 35.

³¹ For the greeting formula, see Grapow, H., *Wie die Alten Ägypter sich anredeten, wie sie sich grüssten, und wie sie miteinander sprachen*, vol. III, Berlin 1941, pp. 106–114, esp. p. 107 (for the omission *<i>n*, ‘by’). This interpretation assumes that *in* can be followed by a suffix pronoun, which is not certain; the only examples with pronominal subjects listed by Grapow (p. 113) use the third person plural 𐀀 (where of course it is impossible to tell whether it is a suffix or a dependent pronoun). The reading *<i>n=i*, ‘said by me’ thus hinges on the interpretation of the element *<i>n*, a matter that requires more discussion than that possible here; for an overview of the issues see Faulkner, R.O., ‘The verb *l* “to say” and its developments’, *JEA* 21 (1935), 177–190; Gardiner, A.H., *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. Oxford 1957, §§436–437, pp. 347–348.

³² Davies, N. de Garis, *The Temple of Hibis in El-Khargeh Oasis* (=Publications of the

a reference to the Syria-Palestine area.³³ His relevance to Egyptians travelling to – or operating in – these areas is perhaps best exemplified by the repeated inclusion of his name and image on the walls of the Hathor temple at Serabit al-Khadim in the Sinai.³⁴

It is not clear to me what the purpose of this spell might be, and two options present themselves as plausible explanations. On the one hand the terminology is reminiscent of passages scattered throughout the mortuary literature, and the spell would sit easily alongside others from collections like the Book of the Dead. On the other hand the reference to ‘Sopdu-Hor, Lord of the East’ may suggest that the title should be taken literally, and that the ostrakon contains a spell to assist a living person in his travels, to keep him safe on journeys to foreign, and perhaps especially eastern, lands. Contemporary letters make frequent reference to travellers praying to both gods of their home town and of the foreign areas they are travelling through,³⁵ and a magical spell would certainly not be alien to the Egyptian way of dealing with the potential dangers of travelling. A cultural parallel of sorts is provided by the use of ‘fording spells’ to protect cattle and their herdsmen from crocodiles when crossing bodies of water, attested both in Old Kingdom tomb scenes, in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts, as well as in surviving magical spells,³⁶ and although it is difficult to estimate the frequency – and corresponding cultural significance – of this practice, it well may have been ubiquitous. A hymn to the Nile from Deir el-Medina, for example, describes this as one of the most recognisable aspects of the inundation season: ‘Uncovered are [the papyrus chests] of the innermost palace, and one looks for “The book of power for [repelling] aggressive crocodiles” in order to shake their hearts, and the water is made safe by its spells’.³⁷ Perhaps significantly, Sopdu (sometimes in the form Anubis-Sopdu) is

³³ Schumacher, I.W., *Der Gott Sopdu, der Herr der Fremdländer* (=OBO 79), Freiburg 1988, p. 147.

³⁴ Schumacher, *Der Gott Sopdu*, pp. 132–136.

³⁵ Such prayers are endemic in the greeting formulae of late Ramesside letters; cf. Wente, E. F., *Late Ramesside Letters* (=SAOC 33), Chicago 1967, passim.

³⁶ Ritner, R. K., *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (=SAOC 54), Chicago 1993, p. 207 n. 956, pp. 225–231; cf. Schneider, T., ‘Contextualising the Tale of the Herdsman’, in Schneider, T. and Szpakowska, K. (eds.), *Egyptian Stories: A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of his Retirement* (=AOAT 347), Münster 2007, pp. 314–315.

³⁷ O. DeM 1675, verso 2–5; Fischer-Elfert, H.-W., *Literarische Ostraka der Ramessidenzeit in Übersetzung*, Wiesbaden 1986, pp. 47–49; Posener, G., *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el-Médineh* (=DFIFAO 20), vol. III, Cairo 1977,

frequently evoked in connection with the safe crossing of water, and at least three separate fording-spells in P. BM EA 10042 (= the Harris Magical Papyrus) mention his name.³⁸ On balance I suspect the latter interpretation of O. NM 11677 is marginally more likely to be correct, and that the application of the spell should be sought in the world of the living rather than the dead.

NM 11678 (Pl. 4)

This is a limestone ostrakon measuring c. 7.5 x 9 cm, with traces of three lines of hieratic on the front, and four lines on the back, all in black ink. It is broken and consists of at least five separate fragments, all of which have been glued back together in modern times. The surface of the ostrakon has been roughly polished, perhaps to facilitate writing, but the ink is partly washed off and very faint, making most of it illegible. The transcription reflects this, and in places (esp. on the back) corresponds to little more than educated guesses: it is included here simply for the sake of completeness. The text itself seems literary in nature, perhaps with a mythological narrative element:

Front

1. [...] the land belongs to him, likewise [...]
2. [...] in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis (?) [...]
3. [...] power [...]

Back

1. [...]
2. [...] this road (?) [...]
3. [...] Re has come (?), the mistress (?) [...]
4. [...]

NM 11679

This is a limestone flake measuring c. 9 x 5 cm, with four lines of hieratic in black ink on one side only. The text is administrative in nature:

1. First month of Akhet, final day (*ʿrky*).
2. Those who are held back ^a of

³⁸ Leitz, C., *Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom* (=Papyri from the

3. the people belonging to the sanctuary.^b

4. Humy [end] ^c

a. The sense of the word *isk* is generally 'to linger, to wait, to hold back, to hinder' (*Wb.* I, 133.6-12), and because the ostrakon relates to the organisation of work, 'held back' or 'hindered' seems to suit the context. The phrase usually employed to indicate absence from work in hieratic documents, at least in those from the Theban necropolis during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, is *wsf*,³⁹ so the nuance of meaning of *isk* may rather be that the workers were not simply absent, but that they had been deliberately delayed or held back. The use of the word in the management of people is illustrated by the comparable work-lists of the Eighteenth Dynasty found near the tomb of Senmut at Thebes (TT 71), where two ostraca – dual copies of the same text – mention a certain Beshau who was 'delayed on account of the planks' (*Bšw isk.w m-^c n³ n ht.w*).⁴⁰ Similarly, a Ramesside letter from a vizier mentions a contingent of *medjay* that had been sent to the Delta to look for Meshwesh-Libyans and which the writer wants to have sent south once their mission has been completed; he instructs their superior, the Chief of *medjay* Sermontu, as follows: 'Do not hold back a single man from among them'.⁴¹ Compare also another Ramesside letter (not included in the *Wb.*) where the writer warns the addressee about the potential dangers of holding soldiers back in various villages: 'You should round up (*htht*) the soldiers [of the army who] are in the villages near you. If you let any soldiers of the army be held back (*ir dl=k isk*) in the villages near you, be careful! Keep them occupied with the horses of the stable masters of the villages until I reach Memphis'.⁴² Perhaps relevant in this context is the designation of the 'wells' or 'pits' in royal


³⁹ Janssen, Jac. J., 'Absence from work by the necropolis workmen of Thebes', *SAK* 8 (1980), p. 145.

⁴⁰ O. Senmut 63 and 64 (var. *Bšw isk.w m rd.t in.tw n=n wnhw 2 hn^c m^c.w 2 n šd.t*, 'Beshau was delayed in causing to be brought to us the two boards and two poles of acacia wood'); Hayes, W.C., *Ostraka and Name-stones from the Tomb of Sen-Mut at Thebes*, New York 1942, 21, pl. XIII. I am grateful to Malte Römer for this reference.

⁴¹ P. Louvre 3169, line 5: *m dl isk rmt w lm=w*; *KRI* VI, 525.6; translated by Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, p. 53 no. 61.


⁴² P. Cairo 58054, recto 9-13= *KRI* I, 323.9-13. The word is written there with an initial aleph (𐎠𐎠𐎠); compare Coptic ⲱⲕ, Vycichl, W., *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue copte*, Leuven 1983, p. 251; Černý, J., *Coptic Etymological Dictionary*, Cambridge 1976, pp. 229-230. The text continues with similar instructions to 'not let a single written order that I have sent you be delayed' (*m rd.t isk w^c m n³ n md3.t rd.t n=ī m dr.t=k m sš*: lines 13-14). and 'I not let the soldiers be delayed (*isk*) in your northern

tombs of the Valley of the Kings as *ḥ wshṯ išk*, ‘the hall of hindering’, although their exact purpose is unclear,⁴³ and an epithet of Thoth which describes him as ‘one who holds back offices’ (*išk ḥw.t*) – the latter being the opposite of his more well-known designation as ‘one who advances offices’ (*shnt ḥw.t*).⁴⁴

b. The phrase *pr-hyn* has so far only been attested in relatively late sources, but NM 11679 demonstrates that it was already in use during the 18th Dynasty;⁴⁵ otherwise there is a single Ramesside attestation of a form of Amun-Re as ‘Amun-Re in the *pr-hyn*’.⁴⁶ Its precise meaning on NM 11679 is not clear, and the later sources provide only limited information about its nature: P. Wilson’s *A Ptolemaic Lexikon* translates *hyn* as ‘the dwelling place of a god’, citing examples that mention Khnum and other gods residing in such a location; it was clearly a physical location to which priests could go in procession, but also an administrative entity to which they could belong.⁴⁷ The latter meaning is perhaps particularly relevant here – the *pr-hyn* was presumably the institution who wanted to keep track of the people mentioned on NM 11679. What this institution was I do not know, but presumably a sanctuary associated with one of the Theban temples. The determinatives used in this text () are curious, and may indicate that cultivated trees formed a part of New Kingdom *pr-hyn* sanctuaries (compare O. Berlin P 11253 below).

⁴³ Thomas, E., ‘The “Well” in Kings’ Tombs of Bibân el-Molûk’, *JEA* 64 (1978), pp. 80–83; suggestions for their function include protection against tomb robbers and flash flooding, or as mainly symbolic architectural elements. The interpretation of them as (ineffective) obstacles to robbery seems the most plausible option to me.

⁴⁴ Caminos, R. A., *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (=Brown Egyptological Studies 1), London 1954, pp. 462, 511.




⁴⁵ Malte Römer in Berlin kindly informs me that O. MMA 19.3.26 also includes a reference to a ‘mistress of the *pr-hyn*’ () which may be related to the same institution. This ostrakon, part of a dossier of administrative texts found in the Deir el-Bahri area at Thebes, dates to the 18th Dynasty based on the palaeography.

⁴⁶ KRI VI, 550.1, from the tomb of Imiseba (TT 65), temp. Ramesses IX; this is the reference used by Gauthier, H., *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*, vol. II, Cairo 1926, p. 109. Compare the mention of ‘Amun-of-the-*pr-hyn*’ in n. 47 below.



⁴⁷ Wilson, P., *A Ptolemaic Lexikon: A lexicographical study of the texts in the temple of Edfu* (=OLA 78), Leuven 1997, pp. 601–602; there is also an inscription in the Opet temple at Karnak (temp. Ptolemy VIII) which mentions ‘Isis of the southern *pr-hyn*’; de Wit, C., *Les inscriptions du temple d’Opet à Karnak* (=BAeg 11), Bruxelles 1958, p. 141. Further references in *Wb.* II, 484.11–12, including a statue that mentions a ‘God’s servant of Amun-in-the-*pr-hyn*’; cf. Hannig, R., *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch – Deutsch*,


c. I take Humy (*hmy*) to be an otherwise unknown personal name (except for the related document in Berlin, see further below).⁴⁸ Alternatively it could be an unattested title (a type of worker, for example); this might explain the number ‘16’ which follows after *hmy* in O. Berlin P 11253, seemingly without further qualification.⁴⁹

The above-mentioned ostrakon in Berlin (P 11253) is an almost identical parallel to NM 11679, albeit with a different date (Month 2 Shomu, final day); it mentions the same institution (‘the sanctuary’) and the same individual (Hумы):

1. Second month of Shomu, final day (*rkꜣ*).
2. Those who are held back of the people of the sanctuary
(  );
3. Humy, held back: 16 (men?).

The Berlin ostrakon has been dated to the 18th Dynasty based on the palaeography, and this is also the most likely date for NM 11679.⁵⁰ The provenance of either object is not known, but the general dearth of hieratic ostraca from Deir el-Medina from the 18th Dynasty, as well as the lack of parallels for either a ‘sanctuary’ or the personal name ‘Hумы’ in the abundant Ramesside material from the site, may suggest that they originated elsewhere, perhaps in the Deir el-Bahri area, but without further information about which ‘sanctuary’ they refer to there is little hope in establishing their context.

Both ostraca are clearly part of the same accounting procedure, using the same (rare) phraseology to denote absence or delay of work, and presumably relate to a single institution. They are unlikely to have been written by the same scribe – the hand of the Berlin piece is distinctly more practiced and careful – and there are differences in the orthography: compare for example the writing of *išk* where the Berlin ostrakon has  while the Copenhagen one has  as the determinative.

⁴⁸ Ranke, *PN*, I, 239.16. Malte Römer also informs me of an example of the name from his unpublished corpus of 18th Dynasty Deir el-Bahri ostraca where it occurs as part of another personal name;  (‘O. 23001.210’; Malte Römer, pers. comm.).

⁴⁹ First published in *Hieratische Papyrus aus Berlin* III, p. 30. See now the online publication as part of the Munich database of non-literary ostraca from Deir el-Medina; <http://obelix.arf.fak12.uni-muenchen.de/cgi-bin/mmcgi2mmhob/mho-1/hobmain/>, sub. Berlin P 11253 (accessed 9 May 2011).

⁵⁰ On the date of Berlin P 11253. see *Hieratische Papyrus aus Berlin* III. 30; Ranke,

NM 11679 seems unfinished compared to the Berlin piece, as there is no information after the name Humy to indicate how many people under his command were held back, whereas as P 11253 adds 'held back: 16 (men?)'. Both texts are dated to the final day (*rky*) of their respective months, which suggests that they relate to an 'end-of-month' administrative procedure,⁵¹ although why in both cases a single individual should be mentioned is less clear; one possible interpretation is that they are the result of a representative of the 'sanctuary' attempting to keep track of the workmen under the command of Humy.




⁵¹ Compare perhaps the 'box' (of writings?) handed over by someone at Deir el-Medina to some high officials at the end of the third month of Akhet ('Month 3 of Akhet, Day 26'), and then again at the end of the third month of Peret ('Month 3 of Peret, Day 26') on the back of P. Chester Beatty I; for a recent discussion, see Haring, B.J.J. and Donker van Heel K. *Writing in a Workmen's Village: Scribal Practice at Deir el-*








ON THE PICTORIAL MEANING OF THE DROP-SHAPED HIEROGLYPH FOR 'COPPER' FROM THE ARCHAIC PERIOD TO THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

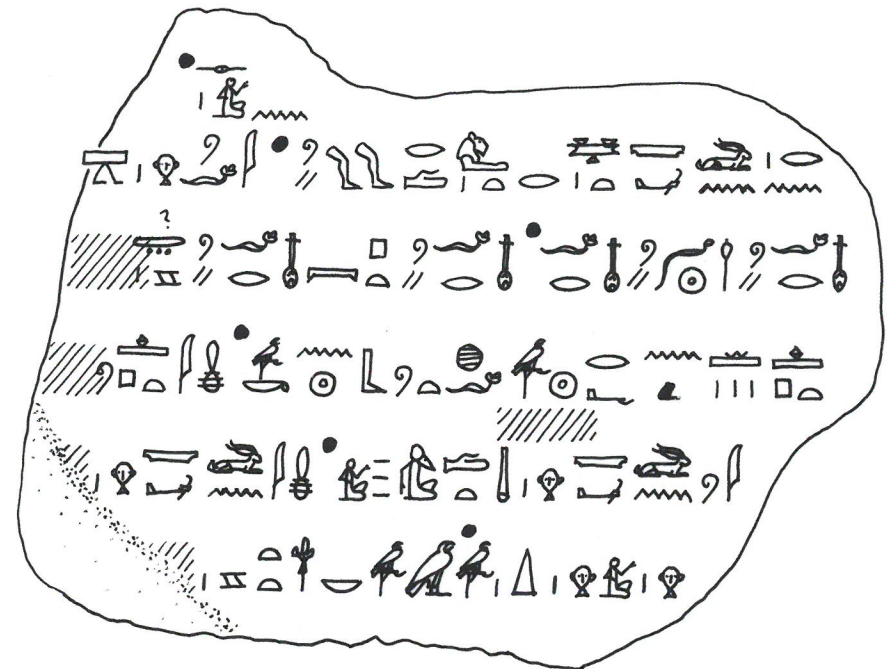
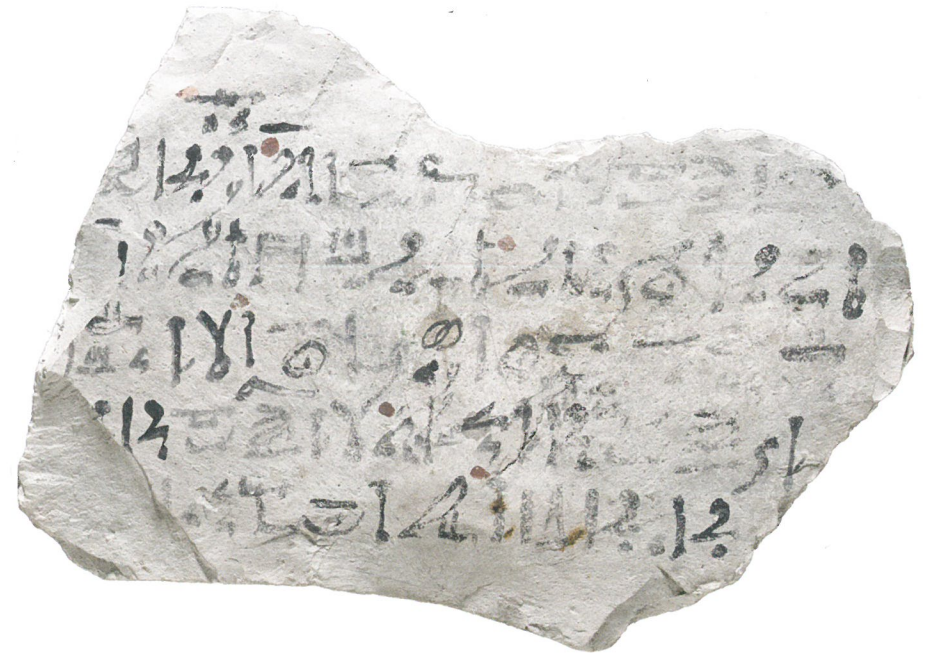
OLE HERSLUND

Abstract. This article examines the evidence for the pictorial signified of the drop-shaped hieroglyph for 'copper'. With an outset in the discussion concerning the pictorial signified of the variant hieroglyphs for 'copper' it is clear that a consensus has never been reached within Egyptology. There simply continues to exist two different interpretations. One argues that 'copper' hieroglyphs are renderings of ingots whereas the other relates the sign forms to crucibles. By drawing upon hitherto overlooked evidence from both art and the writing system it is argued that the drop-shaped variant of the hieroglyph for 'copper' is a somewhat schematic depiction of a crucible, or rather a crucible packed in charcoal. Thereby the pictorial meaning of the drop-shaped hieroglyph finds a common ground with the later main variants of 'copper' hieroglyphs, in addition to whatever meaning they otherwise carry.

1. CRUCIBLE OR INGOT?

Anyone looking through hieroglyphic sign lists for descriptions of the 'copper' sign  and its variant sign forms  and , in order to determine what it depicts, will note that a consensus regarding the pictorial meaning has never been reached within Egyptology.¹ There simply continues to exist two parallel interpretations of the copper hieroglyphs' pictorial meaning, though only one draws on evidence from outside the writing system. To this should be added that so far we only have

¹ The reading of  and its variant sign forms  and  is still somewhat controversial in terms of both transliteration and translation. According to GSL N34  as logogram for 'copper' was 'early perhaps read *b3* and later *hmt* (?)'. But the phonetic value *hmt* is not attested in the textual record of the Pharaonic Period. It is only known from the supposed Coptic derivation *zomnt/zomt* 'copper' = Crum, W.E., *Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford 1939, p. 678 a-b. Conversely there is more than good reason to believe that , and its earlier variant sign forms  and , as logogram should be read *b3* in all periods and that it always signified 'copper'. See Lalouette, C., 'Le "firmament de cuivre". Contribution à l'étude

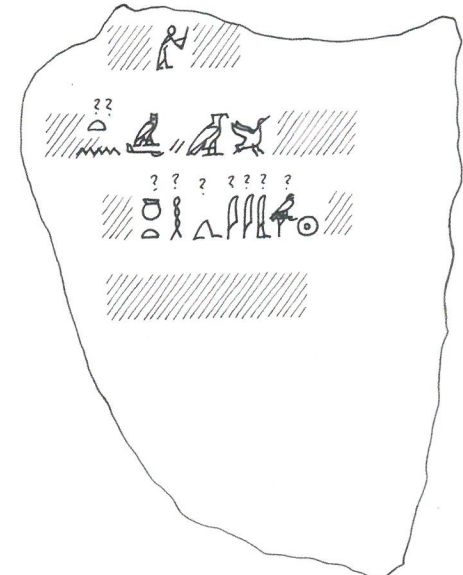
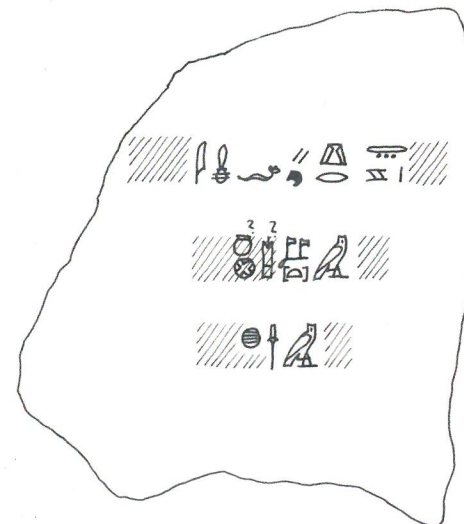




Recto



Verso



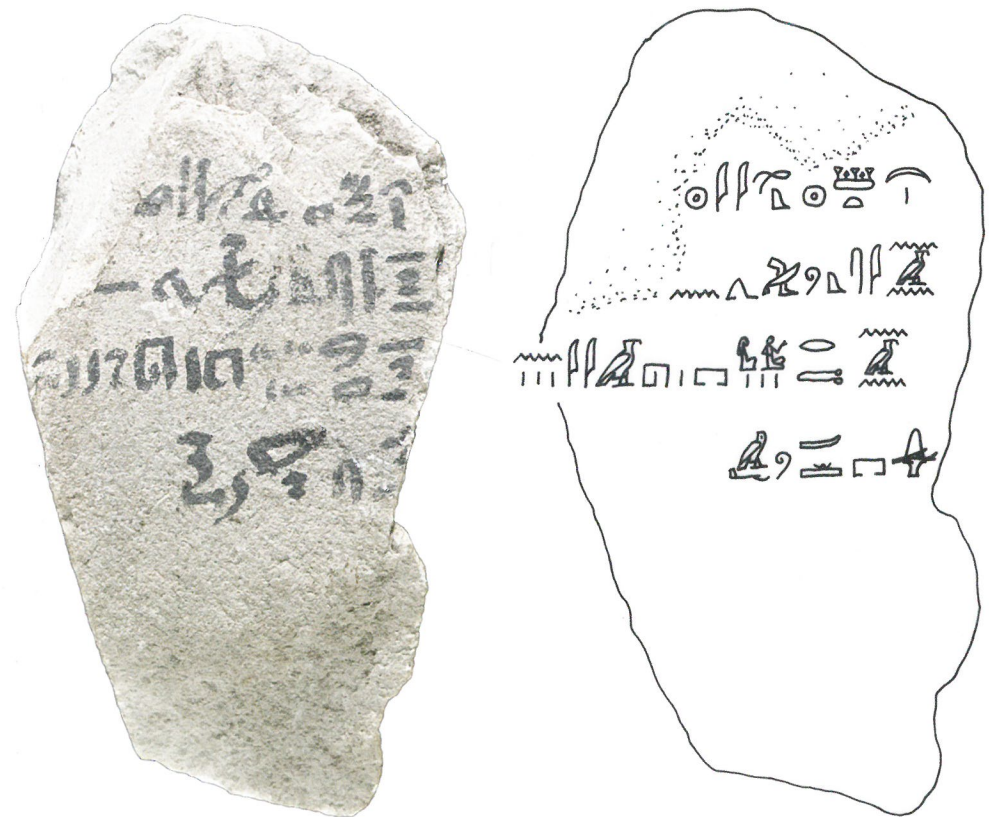


Fig. 3. O. NM 11679. Photograph courtesy of Antiksamlingen, Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen; transcription by F. Hagen.